Mitchell Assails Media Coverage

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DALLAS, April 30 (UPI)—Attorney General John N. Mitchell, joining the Nixon administration attack on the news media, today criticized some in the press for "shocking contempt for truth and a cheap surrender to instinct."

While antiwar protesters ringed the Justice Department in Washington, Mitchell flew to Texas for a Law Day speech at Southern Methodist University.

He said the nation is "inviting grave danger" because of "a sharp erosion of professionalism among many who have the public's ear."

"We find emotion and intuition in the saddle, while truth is trampled in the dust," Mitchell said.

He attacked press handling of the so-called "no knock" provision of the District of Columbia crime bill, of recently enacted criminal and narcotics legislation, and of "the widely circulated but false report that 28 Black Panthers had been killed by police."

Mitchell contended that The New York Times and The Washington Post reported as fact that police killed 28 blacks "in a national scheme by various agencies of the government."

"Not one death can be attributed to any national scheme of genocide," Mitchell said. "The fraud has been laid bare and some publications have admitted their mistake. But this is small compensation for the sorry spectacle of supposedly responsible public figures and the press repeating the most damaging charges without finding out what the facts really were."

Referring to the "no-knock" provision of the Washington crime bill passed by Congress, Mitchell said opponents "conjured up images of Hitler's storm troopers kicking in the doors of their trembling victims."

"Actually, the provision gives more citizen protection, not less," he said, because the decision to enter and search is taken from police and given to a judge, who must approve a "no-knock" entry.

Mitchell said some news media reporting reminds him of George Orwell's novel "1984" and its language of "Newspeak, in which words assume opposite meanings—wrong becomes right, and fiction becomes truth."